

PS 1663

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ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH

A Legend of Nieuw Amsterdam

Mrs. Morris Patterson Ferris

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PS1663
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O NCE on a time, old legends say,
Niew Amsterdam wore its gala array
For the Dominie's daughter's wedding day.

The Dominie was of great renown,
And, in bafy white and black silk gown,
The proudest man in the quaint Dutch town.

Ay! a famous man was the Dominie,
Who had recently come from over the sea;
To preside o'er the little church near the Fort,
And teach the good Dutchmen the doctrines of Dort;
And not long since he had taken to wife
Vrou Anneke Jans, thus causing great strife,
For the Dutch maidens vied his favor to gain,
And laid deep plots to meet him, by chance, in Love Lane.

Now Anneke Jans, to continue my yarn,
Was owner of all the famous King's Farm,
And therefore was held as the first in the land,
When she doff'd widow's weeds for Bogardus's hand.

The Dominie's cottage was pleasant to see,
With its stoop shaded o'er by a sycamore tree;
Antique knocker so bright, and the half-open door,
And the parlor inviting with fresh sanded floor,
Then its garden so trim, tulip borders around,
For the Dutch made best use of each bit of ground.

From miles 'round the guests came to see the maid wed,
And later by Anneke's dainties be fed,
And Burgher and Jufvrouw in gala array
Were fully prepared to make glad holiday.

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It had long been the wish of the good Dominie
To build a new church, for the old one, you see,
Was a barn, and at one time had been a horse-mill,
And to preach in it humbled the proud old man's will.

Now, the Dominie thought, is the very best time
To start a subscription, and let each one sign,
For thus can be built a worthier fane,
And surely a new church will be a great gain.

The Director was there, in his pomp and his pride,
With his worthy co-laborer, De Vries, by his side,
The Stevensons, Schuylers, Bayards and van Dycks,
Polhemuses, Cuylers, van Sielens, van Wycks,
De Kays and van Cortlandts, the Banckers, van Brughs,
De Meyers, van Rensselaers, Kierstedes, du Trieux,
Van Hornes and van Brummels, van Dusens, van Burens,
The Brinckerhoffs, Bleeckers, van Dams and van Keurens,
The Douws and van Breestedes, van Gaasbeecks, van Duyns,
De Witts and van Geisens, van Gansevoorts, Pruyns,
The Visschers, van Vechtens, and more of renown—
The fairest and best of the little Dutch town.

The wedding was over, the twain were made one,
And now had festivities fairly begun;
There was laughter and jest, which the Dominie led,
And the best songs were sung and the best speeches said.
Soon the feast was announced, and 'twas a fine sight,
'Twould have filled any housekeeper's heart with delight.
There were waffles as light as the foam of the sea,
And roellachaje, biscuit and very black tea,
Pound, plum cake and jumbles, and trout from the brook,
And a fabulous dish of the famed olijkoek.
There was wine, beer, mead, punch which the Dominie brewed,
And which, on my honor, I tell you, was good;
And the truth must be told, though tradition is mum,
An enormous supply of old Santa Cruz Rum.

Their eyes how they twinkled! their mirth, oh, how merry!
Their breath smelt of punch, and their speech told of sherry;
And the late hours sped on, and the laughter grew loud,
And I think I must call them a right jolly crowd.

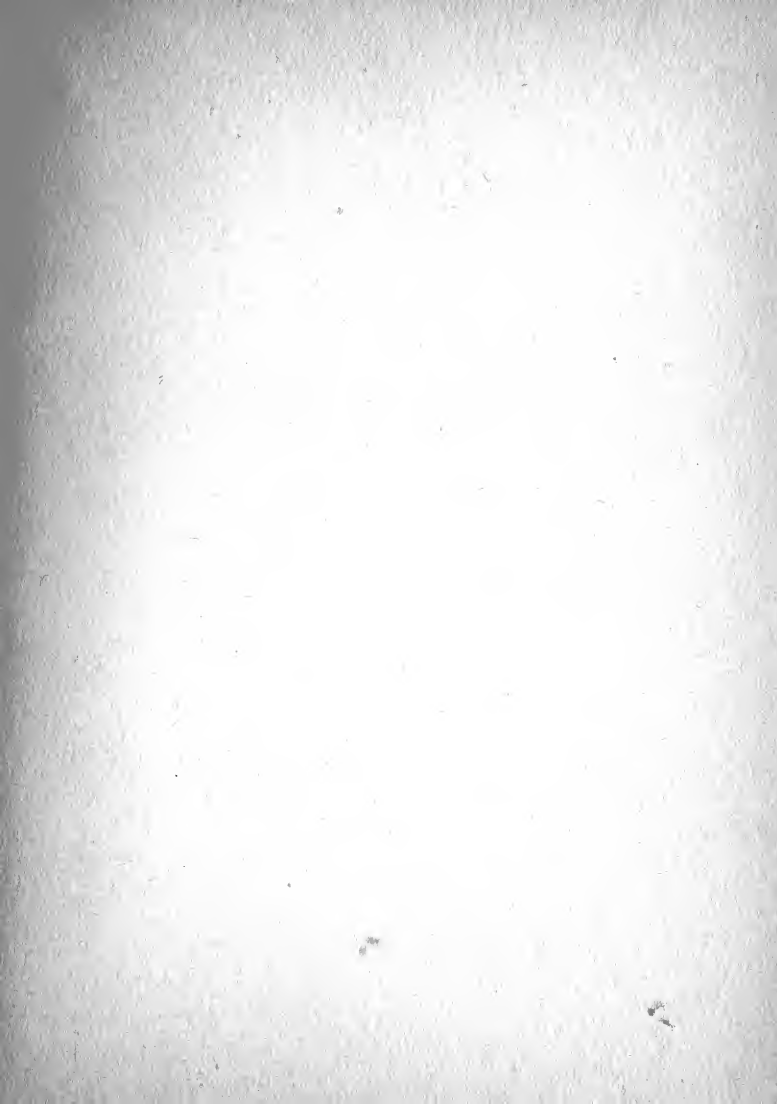
'Twas the Dominie's chance the paper to seize
And lead off the list with Heer Kieft and De Vries,
And each in his turn would not be outdone,
And promised to donate a generous sum.
So the money was raised in a very short time,
For the wily host managed that each one should sign.

The wedding soon over, the guests having sped,
The happy old Dominie went to his bed.

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When the guests realized on the following day
How much they had pledged, they were quite loath to pay,
But as hon'rabable men they were bound by their word,
And it never would do "to go back on the Lord."

Thus the new church was built in the famous old Fort,
And the Dominie smiled when he thought what he'd wrought;
So St. Nicholas' Church, tho' teetot'lers repine,
Owed its life, as you see, to the Dominie's wine.



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